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AUTHOR Bond, Carole L.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This evaluation report of the "Learning Is Homegrown" workshop series, given by Dorothy Rich in a large school district, focuses on the workshops and the learning materials and their impact on parent-child relationships as perceived by parents. The evaluation report first points out that the dropout rate and low reading scores of the school district warranted a program for parents which would teach them how to better help their children with reading and other school work. The report then states that evaluation forms were generated to accommodate the needs of the community. The report discusses workshop leader training and provides the results of a survey of 966 parents who attended the workshops--most of the parents reviewed the workshops favorably and implemented what they learned regarding their children and homework supervision. The report notes that 45 separate "Learning Is Homegrown" workshops were held in the community. According to the report, findings from the parent surveys allows for the following conclusions: (1) workshops for parents were perceived to be both useful and helpful; (2) sponsorship of the workshops by various community groups probably increases the number of parents who participate; and (3) participation of parents in the workshops appears to increase the number of hours children spend on homework, increases the time the parent spends working with the child on homework and other activities, and helps the working relationship betwen parent and child become more positive. Contains nine tables of data; various survey instruments are appended.) (NKA)

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LEARNING IS HOMEGROWN - WORKSHOP SERIES

AN EVALUATION REPORT

Carole L. Bond
Marguerite G. Malone
E. Ann Harris

Center for Research in Educational Policy
College of Education
Memphis State University
Memphis, Tennessee 38152

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LEARNING IS HOMEGROWN - WORKSHOP SERIES

AN EVALUATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

"Learning is Homegrown" was a series of workshops developed by Dr. Dorothy Rich.[1] The workshops were held in a large metropolitan area and sponsored by a major bank. The workshops were designed to provide parents with materials and support with which to enhance their child's progress in school. Created by Dr. Rich, President of the Home and School Institute and implemented in several areas of the country, this approach was deemed appropriate for implementation in an area with a school district which is in top tenth percentile in size in the United States. The drop out rate and low reading scores of the school district warranted a program for parents which would teach the parents how to better help their child with reading and other school work.

The purpose of the evaluation was to focus on the workshops and the learning materials, called recipes, and their impact on parent-child relationships as perceived by parents. In order to conduct this evaluation several forms were generated. These forms were based on the original format of the assessment forms utilized by Dr. Rich. Some of the forms were modified to accommodate the needs of the this community and this evaluation

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[1]. Rich, D. (1989) MegaSkills - How Families Can Help Children Succeed in School and Beyond. Published by Home and School Institute.

process.

PROCEDURE

Instruments

Several forms were used to gather data from the workshop leaders and the participants in the workshops. Those forms were: Leader Information, Leader Training Evaluation, Leader Report, Parent Information, Recipe Feedback, and Family Survey. The forms are included in the Appendix and are described in the report that follows.

Leader Training

All workshop leaders attended a one and a half day training session. During the training session, time was devoted to describing the evaluation requirements, procedures, and forms. This process involved an initial recording of all participants attending the workshop sessions, a leader report for each session, a report on recipes used by the participants after attending each workshop sessions, and an assessment of the workshops sessions based on the leaders perceptions of those sessions. In addition, the workshop leaders assessed their training session immediately upon its conclusion. They were again asked to assess the training session after completing their workshops. The initial evaluation was to determine the leader's perceptions of the training session before implementing the workshops. The second evaluation was to determine if their perceptions were the same after they had conducted the workshops. The leaders were instructed to tabulate the forms they received

from the participants and send them to a designated person.

POPULATION

Leaders

The following information was obtained from the "Leader Information" form. The purpose of this form was to obtain demographic information about the leaders who conducted the workshops.

The workshop leaders were volunteers who reside in the community. Of the 36 leaders who completed the leader information form, 85% were between the ages of 26 and 50. Of the 36 leaders, 64% were parents, 50% reported having had workshop or leader training, and 70% reported teaching experience.

Participants

The following information was obtained from the "Parent Information" form. The purpose of this form was to obtain demographic information regarding the families of those who participated.

Of the 966 people participating in the workshops, 82% were mothers, 6% fathers, and all but one of the remaining participants were "other" family members. While typically only one member of the adult family participated in the workshop sessions, information regarding the entire family unit was obtained. The adults of the families who participated the workshops were primarily between the ages of 26 and 36.

The occupations of the parents were varied. The highest percentage of occupations of the fathers was in the category of professional, technical, or managerial. For the mothers, the largest percentage was in the clerical category. Table 1 represents the major occupational areas for both fathers and mothers. Not all percentages listed will total 100% since the percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 1: Occupations of the Participants

Father's Occupation	%	Mother's Occupation	%
Professional, technical, managerial	25	Clerical	23
Service worker	16	Household worker	19
Administrator	13	Professional, technical, managerial	19
Laborer	13	Service Worker	15
Other*	33	Other*	24

*Other represents such occupations as sales, craftsman, farmer, military, or unemployed.

Approximately 34% of the fathers completed grade 12 as their highest educational level, 27% reported having attended some college, 18% received a bachelor's degree and 9% a received a master's degree. Of the mothers, 40% completed grade 12, 30% reported having attended some college, 13% received a bachelor's degree, and 6% received a master's degree. Less than 12% of the

fathers and 10% of the mothers reported that they had not completed highschool.

There were many children who participated in the workshops with their parents or a family member. The ages of the children ranged from under three years of age to over 15 years of age. Sixteen percent of the children were under age 3, 20% between 3 and 5, 25% between age 6 and 8, 24% between age 9 and 11, and 9% between age 12 and 14. The remainder were over age 15.

The largest percentage of parents (47%) learned of the workshop from their neighborhood schools. The remainder of the parents learned about the workshop from the local newspaper, radio, community groups, another family member, or friends.

FINDINGS

There were 45 separate "Learning is Homegrown" workshops held in the community. The number of workshop sessions conducted varied by site. Some of the sites held only one session while others held eight. It was originally planned to report the findings in two separate groups, with one group representing the workshop sites which held fewer than four sessions and the other group representing the workshop sites which held four or more sessions. However, upon analysis of the data, it was determined that the findings were virtually the same. Parent perceptions and participation did not differ significantly depending on the number of workshop sessions held. The only difference noted were in the leader perceptions of the sessions and those are reported separately. Overall the parents were very positive in their

responses regarding the workshops. This information is presented in Table 2. The information presented in Tables 2 through 8 was obtained from the "Family Survey" and reflects the parent perceptions of parent-child relationships occurring as a result of the workshops.

Table 2: Participant Perceptions of the Workshop Sessions

	% Yes	% No
Enjoyed the program	99	1
Recipes helped to understand child better	99	1
Helped child accept responsibility	95	5
Helped to understand skills and behaviors needed by child in school	97	3
Feel more confident in working with child	97	3
Recipes helped child in school	94	6
Child's attitude toward school is better	91	9
Feel more positive about teacher and school	71	29
Time spent was useful	99	1
Child's grades improved	81	19

Parents reported their perceptions of changes that may have taken place as result of their participation in the workshops as represented by number of hours their child spent in doing homework, the amount of time the parents spent in checking homework and helping their child with the homework, and the

amount of television the child watched during the school week. They also reported on how much time they spent with their child each day and their perceptions of how well their child was doing in school.

The percent of time spent on homework generally increased after the parents had completed the workshops. Those spending over six hours a week doubled from 12% to 24%, while those spending one hour or less decreased from 12% to 4%. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Hours Child Spent in Homework - Before and After Parents Participated in Workshop Sessions

	% Before	% After
Over 6 hours	12	24
4 to 6 hours	14	12
2 to 4 hours	24	19
1 to 2 hours	37	41
Less than 1 hour	12	4

Reported frequency of checking the child's homework increased after the participants had attended the workshops. However, with respect to the parents helping their child with homework very few changes resulted. These findings are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: Checked Child's Homework

	% Before	% After
All of the time	5	5
Most of the time	56	71
Sometimes	28	22
Never	12	1

Table 5: Helped with Homework

	% Before	% After
All of the time	5	4
Most of the time	53	58
Sometimes	40	37
Never	2	>1

The amount of television watched by the participants' children during the school week decreased somewhat after the parents had attended the workshops. The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Amount of Television Watched During School Week

	% Before	% After
1 to 5 hours	43	49
6 to 10 hours	34	33
11 to 15 hours	15	9
Over 15 hours	8	9

Overall, the amount of time that parents reported spending with their child after completing the workshop sessions reflected an increase over the amount of time they had spent prior to participating in the workshops. In addition, parents' perceptions of the positive working relationship with their child increased. The findings can be found in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7: Time Parent Spent with Child Each Day

	% Before	% After
3 or more hours	45	51
2 hours to 3 hours	12	16
1 hour to 2 hours	13	15
30 minutes to 1 hour	21	13
Up to 30 minutes	7	>1
None	2	3

Table 8: Working Relationship Between Parent and Child

	% Before	% After
Work very well together	55	75
Average working relationship	34	23
Do not work so well together	11	2
No working relationship	>1	>1

The parents' perceptions of how well their child was doing in school increased after participation in the workshop sessions. The findings are represented in Table 9.

Table 9: Parent Perceptions Child's Progress in School

	% Before	% After
Very well	52	67
Average	35	29
Not very well	13	4

According to the "Parent Feedback" form, the recipes prepared for the workshops by Dr. Rich were used with 470 children. Recipes were most often used in the home but some were used in the workshops sessions when the child accompanied the participant. Parents reported that their child learned something useful from the recipes. The categories of the most often

reported comments were: 1) the recipes provided enjoyment for both child and parent, 2) the parents were motivated to challenge their child's problem solving skills, and 3) the recipes opened a positive line of communication and closeness between the parent and child.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above reported findings, the following conclusions were drawn. Workshops for parents, designed to give parents guidance in helping their child at home with schoolwork were perceived by parents to be both useful and helpful. Sponsoring the workshops by various community groups probably increases the number of parents who participate. Participation of parents in the workshops appears to increase the number of hours a child spends on homework, increases the time the parent spends working with the child both with homework and in other activities, and helps the working relationship between parent and child become more positive.

APPENDIX

Learning Is Homegrown

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LEADER INFORMATION

Name _____

	YES	NO
1. Have you served as a workshop trainer/leader on the topic of parenting before?	___	___
2. Are you a parent?	___	___
3. Have you had community/leadership experience previously?	___	___

If so, please describe briefly.

For how long?

4. Have you had training/teaching experience previously?	___	___

If so, please describe briefly.

For how long?

5. Please complete the following information.

Occupation _____

Age:
___ 20-25
___ 26-30
___ 31-40
___ 41-50
___ 51-60
___ over 60

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Evaluation of Training Sessions

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training sessions provided me with the information I needed as a leader.					
The topics covered were timely and were of use to me.					
The handouts/materials from the training sessions were easily used in the workshop sessions.					
The directions given during the training sessions were easily applied to the workshop sessions.					
The leader training sessions were well organized.					
I would recommend that others participate in these training sessions in order to become leaders.					

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Which leader training sessions were the most beneficial to you? Why?

Which leader training sessions were the least beneficial to you? Why?

In what areas would you have liked to have had more information before beginning the workshops? Why?

Was there any part of the leader training sessions that could have been eliminated? Please state what they were and why.

Do you have any suggestions for further leader training sessions?

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LEADER REPORT

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

TELEPHONE_____

WORKSHOP #_____ BEST TIME TO CALL _____

SITE_____

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: ADULTS _____ CHILDREN _____

The best thing that happened:

A not-so-good thing that happened:

Follow-up plans:

Help needed from "Learning is Homegrown"/HSI:

Additional comments:

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Parent Information

Date_____

Location of Workshop _____

Father's Name _____ Age _____

Occupation _____

Education to grade: _____

Mother's Name _____ Age _____

Occupation _____

Education to grade: _____

Which parent will participate in the program?

Father _____ Mother _____ Both _____ Other _____

Number of children participating _____ Age(s) _____

Child is living with:

Natural Parents ____ One parent alone ____
Adoptive Parents ____ Parent and Step Parent ____
Other _____

1. How did you learn about the program?

____ School
____ Community Group
____ Newspaper, T.V., or Radio
____ Friends
____ Group Leader
____ Other _____

2. What made you decide to participate?

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RECIPE FEEDBACK SHEET FROM HOME

Recipe:_____ Date:_____

Number of children participating _____ Age(s) _____

We are pleased to provide these learning recipes as a way of strengthening the bond between home and school and fostering excellence in education. Your home plays an important part in helping your child succeed. We are interested in knowing your reaction to the recipes. Please complete this form for one of the recipes you tried this week. Thank you.

1. Was this recipe used in your home? Yes___ No___

2. Who did the recipe with the child?

   Mother ___ Father ___ Other ___

3. Did this recipe help you spend enjoyable time with your child? Yes___ No___

4. Do you feel that your child learned something useful? Yes___ No___

5. Would this recipe be helpful to other parents? Yes___ No___

6. Comments:

_____
Parent's Signature - Optional

FROM THE MEGASKILLS® WORKSHOP PROGRAM
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FAMILY SURVEY

Location_____

Please complete this survey based on your experiences, and the experiences of your child, as a result of the workshops. You do not have to answer every question.

1. Number of Children Participating ____ Age(s)_____

	Yes	No
2. Have you enjoyed participating in this program?	____	____
3. Have these recipes helped you to understand your child better?	____	____
4. Have these recipes helped your child to accept more responsibility for tasks and activities at home?	____	____
5. Have these recipes helped you to understand better the skills and behaviors your child needs in school?	____	____
6. Do you feel more confident in working with your child than you did before the sessions?	____	____
7. Do you think these recipes helped your child with school work?	____	____
8. Is your child's attitude toward school better?	____	____
9. Do you feel more positive about your child's teacher(s) and school as a result of this program?	____	____
10. Has the time you spent with your child doing these recipes been useful and worth while?	____	____

11. Do you think your child's grades have improved since you began using the recipes? ____ ____
If yes, would you comment?

12. Approximately how many hours per week does your child spend on homework?

Before Attending Workshop	After Completing Workshop
_____ hours	_____ hours

13. Do you check the homework?

Before Attending Workshop	After Completing Workshop
___ Sometimes	___ Sometimes
___ Most of the time	___ Most of the time
___ Never	___ Never

14. Do you help your child with homework?

Before Attending Workshop	After Completing Workshop
___ Sometimes	___ Sometimes
___ Most of the time	___ Most of the time
___ Never	___ Never

15. Does anyone else in the home help your child with homework?

Before Attending Workshop	After Completing Workshop
___ Yes	___ Yes
___ No	___ No
If yes, who_____	If yes, who _____

16. Approximately how much T.V. does your child watch during the school week?

Before Attending Workshop	After Completing Workshop
___ hours	___ hours

17. How do you think your child is doing in school?

Before Attending Workshop	After Completing Workshop
___ Very well	___ Very well
___ Average	___ Average
___ Not very well	___ Not very well

18. Approximately how much time do you spend with your child each day?

Before Attending Workshop	After Completing Workshop
___ minutes	___ minutes
___ hours	___ hours

19. How well do you and your child work together?

Before Attending Workshop	After Completing Workshop
___ Very well	___ Very well
___ Average	___ Average
___ Not so well	___ Not so well

_____

Parent's Signature - Optional

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